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### **NYPD makes another disingenuous attempt by setting up a meeting with its own hand-selected group of NYC Muslim "Leaders"**

*Demand that Concerns of Muslim Communities be Addressed in an Accountable and Transparent Manner through NYPD Oversight and an Open Community Townhall Meeting*

**March 6, 2012 (New York, NY)**—In the wake of a series of revelations regarding the New York Police Department’s surveillance of Muslim communities, including student groups, in New York City and across the Northeast, the Muslim American Civil Liberties Coalition (MACLC) and the Majlis ash-Shura (Islamic Leadership Council of Metropolitan NY), and concerned allies, are disappointed to learn that NYPD Commissioner Kelly has called together a meeting with Muslim “leaders” that is not representative of the constituency, or the concerns of NYC Muslim communities.

For over a year, numerous leaders and organizations have written letters asking Commissioner Kelly and Mayor Bloomberg for meetings to address the multiple concerns regarding the NYPD’s policies towards NYC Muslim communities. Despite multiple attempts at opening channels of communication, only dismissive, or in some cases dishonest, responses have been received from the NYPD. As a result of the lack of responsiveness, Muslim organizations and leaders have reached out to elected officials, spoken to the media, held press conferences, or organized protests to express their concerns.

Yesterday reports emerged that the NYPD was planning on holding a meeting with a self-selected group of Muslim “leaders” to address the NYPD’s surveillance programs, but excluded the very same Muslim leaders and organizations that have been raising these concerns. Consistent to its pattern, the NYPD undertook a process of selecting invitees that was not transparent, and not representative or inclusive of voices that disagree with the NYPD’s policies.

Debbie Almontaser, Board Chair of the Muslim Consultative Network and a member of MACLC, received a call from the NYPD inviting her to a meeting with less than 24 hours’ notice, and was also told the names of several other Muslim leaders who would be attending. Ms. Almontaser responded, “I have to give this some thought given that the Muslim community has been requesting a meeting with the commissioner to no avail for the last year. And why all of a sudden does the commissioner want to meet with a small group of leaders under such short notice? I will get back to you about my availability.’ Imagine my shock, when I saw my name listed as an attendee in media reports without my permission or a confirmation that I was attending this

meeting! This is an insult to our communities and to our intelligence, and indicates how the NYPD perceives our communities.

Imam Talib, the President of the Majlis ash-Shura (Islamic Leadership Council of Metropolitan NY), described that upon hearing the reports of a meeting, he had reached out to consult with several of the allegedly invited leaders, and discovered that they had neither received an invite, nor were they planning to attend. Imam Talib stated that "through such repeated patterns of closed-door meetings with a limited number of unrepresentative leaders over the years, the NYPD has breached the trust of NYC Muslim communities."

Osman Chowdhury, a taxi driver and organizer, and a leader with DRUM, Desis Rising Up and Moving, asked "Why does he keep talking to leaders who agree with him anyway? If Commissioner Kelly really wants to hear the community concerns, he should come to a townhall meeting to hear real stories about what the NYPD does to us, and to answer our questions."

Another one of the invitees, NYC Commissioner on Human Rights and President of the Association of Muslim American lawyers, Omar Mohammedi mentioned that "this ongoing pattern of lack of respect by the NYPD stems from the lack of any accountability for them. From spying on Muslim communities, to lying on the public record, to stop and frisks of young men from black and Latino communities, the NYPD has no one to hold them accountable. We need a mechanism for oversight over the NYPD."

Both Omar Mohammedi and Debbie Almontaser stated they could not in their good conscience attend such a meeting given what Muslim communities are experiencing, feeling, and asking of their leaders.

Accordingly, this broad coalition of Muslim Organizations and Leaders has issued an open letter to Mayor Bloomberg, the City Council, and the NYPD raising these same concerns in an effort to maintain transparent and meaningful engagement.

**Submitted on behalf of:**

<b>Majlis ash-Shura (Islamic Leadership Council) of Metropolitan NY</b>	<b>Muslim American Civil Liberties Coalition</b>
BOROUGH OF QUEENS Masjid Omar Ben-Abdel Aziz Hillside Islamic Center Masjid Al-Hamdu-Lilla Tauhid:Center for Islamic Dev. Muslim Center of New York ICNA – NY Masjid Darul Da'wah Al-Heera Islamic Institute Woodhaven Jame Masjid	Muslim American Society of New York  Women In Islam, Inc.  Muslim Bar Association of New York  Council on American Islamic Relations - New York  DRUM - Desis Rising Up and Moving  Arab American Association of New York

Islamic Foundation Of New York  
Masjid Abdul Muhaymin  
Muslim Foundation of America

**BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN**

Masjid Taqwa  
MAS- New York  
MAS Youth Center  
Masjid Al-Arqam  
Masjid Iqamatiddeen  
Muslim Ummah of N.A  
Masjid Musa' b bin Umair  
Islamic Mission of America  
Masjid Alfarooq

**BOROUGH OF THE BRONX**

Al-Janed Islamic Center  
MAS Upper NY Bronx Muslim Center

**BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN**

Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood  
Muslim Consultative Network  
Women In Islam, Inc.  
Masjid Sabur

**BOROUGH OF STATEN ISLAND**

Masjid Rahmatillah

MAS Community Center

Muslim Consultative Network

Asian American Legal Defense & Education Fund

Association of Muslim American Lawyers

Muslim Progressive Traditionalist Alliance

CLEAR - Creating Law Enforcement Accountability & Responsibility, Main Street Legal Services, City University of New York School of Law

**Additional Allies**

Muslim Peace Coalition – NY Chapter

Arab Muslim American Federation